

## From the Rabbi's Desk

Rabbi Rachel Smookler

Rachel@Smookler.com



I seem to be always thinking about Torah portions. Especially those that occur in Genesis. Because those are the stories about family, love, rivalry and reconciliation.

And although they were written thousands of years ago for me they still ring very true.

Recently, I was thinking heavily about Joseph. How he rises in power from being in prison to

become Pharaoh's highest officer. And how in the Torah portion *Vayigash* Joseph carries out a very long and even perhaps cruel plan over on his brothers.

The Rabbinic commentators suggest that before Joseph reveals himself to his brothers – who have no idea what happened to him after they sold him to the Ishmaelite Caravan heading to Egypt – Joseph wants to make sure his brothers have changed. That maybe they even feel remorse, having duped their father Jacob and possibly killed their brother Joseph.

Joseph's plot involves a scheme that places the brothers in the predicament of substituting one of their lives for Benjamin. And I began thinking about Joseph's perceived cruelty to his brothers. Joseph decides, after devising many harrowing tests for his brothers, that they had, indeed, learned their lesson. And that this time they felt pure anguish at the thought of their father, Jacob, losing yet another son.

This *parsha* made me ask some pretty difficult questions about human behavior. About whether or not, we, as humans, have more compassion for others, after having suffered ourselves.

It is a question I was reminded of again when I heard the most incredible story about the power of human compassion.

The following story is nothing really like Joseph's story, but there are elements deeply embedded in this *parsha* which force us to

wonder about the power of suffering and its companion – compassion.

A little over a year ago, a man – a father in Texas, the father of a new born baby boy – was pacing the hospital floors. He was taking a break. His wife was in the room with their son, Leonidas. The father of the new born found that it was helpful to stretch and to think.

I can only imagine. Their new born son was born with a rare birth defect called CDH-Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia which placed the baby in great peril. There were many operations to come. And, the doctors told them that there would be a very big chance that their son wouldn't make it.

With all of that weighing heavily upon him, the baby's father went walking around the hallways of the hospital floor. He came upon a table with someone seated behind it. A sign on the table indicated that it was a bone marrow donation drive.

The father of the newborn stopped for a moment. If there was anything he could do to help another person, anything he could do to help in order to help someone else going through the fear and anguish that he and his wife were going through at that time.

The doctors told Leonidas' parents that their baby would need to be in the hospital perhaps for a year! Thank G-d! Incredibly, little Leonidas responded to the surgeries and treatment and was out in 60 days. However, he was still under extreme care.

Three weeks after Leonidas came home from the hospital the father of the baby, 29-year-old Bryan Eddy, got a phone call. When he picked up the phone he was told that that he was a match – a perfect match – for someone who needed a bone marrow transplant.

Bryan and his wife didn't even hesitate. With three kids at home and a newborn still receiving care from his surgeries Bryan agreed to donate his bone marrow. Even though he was working full time as manager of a restaurant and with all of his other

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**The mission of Temple Beth David** is to provide an environment where the concepts of community prayer, education, and service to the greater Jewish community are provided within the context of Conservative Judaism. We pride ourselves on being a friendly, participatory, egalitarian community, welcoming all to be a part of our synagogue family.

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familial obligations. Bryan, in the only way I can explain it substituted his life for another's. A complete stranger.

But it didn't feel like that. Bryan knew all too well what this bone marrow recipient and their family must be going through. In fact, had Bryan not been at the hospital caring for and praying for his own son's recovery he wouldn't have signed up to be a donor.

At that moment, on that day, in that hospital, Bryan signed up to be a bone marrow donor because he knew all too well the suffering that families go through. He was dealing with so much grief that he decided that he would do anything to help others in a similar situation.

I can't imagine how difficult it was for Bryan, such a young man too, to get time off of work for the surgery. To have the procedure to remove the bone marrow – let alone not being able to be there completely for his own infant son and his wife and his other boys.

But, as I said Bryan didn't think twice. It takes a full year before a bone marrow recipient and their donor are able to get each other's contact information. And, just over one year ago was the one-year anniversary of Cameron Hurwitz' bone marrow transformation.

The 14-year old boy we have been saying a *misheberach*, a healing prayer, for every week for more than a year and half...

The boy whom I spoke to you about at Yom Kippur over a year ago...his family was at our synagogue, listening to the sermon about their son...who, at that time, had not yet found a donor match...and his life was hanging by a thread...

Remember?

I had a naming ceremony for him and we chose the name *Yerachmiel HaLevi Yisrael*? I had a Torah scribe write Cameron's new Hebrew name on parchment and nd Cameron's father created a keychain for Cameron so that he could wear it at all times.

His father also enlarged the parchment ith Cameron's new Hebrew name on it and it was taped to the hospital door where Cameron spent six weeks receiving his new bone marrow donated by Bryan Eddy. That amazing man, that angel who stood in for a complete stranger.

Recently I heard this truly incredible story. I listened as Caryn, Cameron's mom, asked me if I remembered the letter she wrote to the anonymous donor hoping that one day she would have a name and address to send it to – to thank that donor for saving her son's life. Caryn had shared with me the letter she wrote to him, wondering if it ever made it to him. Wondering whether or not he would ever respond.

I'll share with you the last few sentences she wrote:

*"Things couldn't be going any better. We are blessed and take nothing for granted. It has been a year of challenges but we are hopeful and praying for continued progress. Today is day 85, and so far, so good. Each day we wake up and pray that the day will be as good as the last. You have given us something we will NEVER be able to repay you for. There are no words to describe our sincere gratitude for your gift. He now has your blood type and marrow that will allow him to thrive. I will be speaking at a local college in the upcoming months to share our story and the need for bone marrow donors to join the national registry. Although we were fortunate enough to have found a perfect match, many do not. You are our hero. It is our wish that someday you have the opportunity to meet our beautiful son who cherishes and makes the most out of each day that he is given. May you be blessed with good health, and a lifetime of joyous days and much love in your life. Sincerely, A grateful mom, dad, brother and your match"*

Two stories: One ancient and one modern. Both teaching us the power of compassion and the power each one of us possesses to save a life.

# From the President's Desk

Andrew Berger

[Andrew.Berger@rochester.edu](mailto:Andrew.Berger@rochester.edu)



On January 28, Temple Beth David held its second community dinner of the 2016-17 year. Marc Lande and Jonathan Papkin were the food coordinators and lead cooks, and Lee Sigelow was our magical musical impresario, presenting a video montage of Jewish songs and cultural offering through the decades. Thank you, all three! And thank you also to all of the congregational cooks who offered their considerably yummy talents. Perhaps best of all, the crowd was both lively and intergenerational. Stay tuned for the next Friday Night Fresh event, probably in May and presumably in our own synagogue space.

Speaking of synagogues....our renovations should all be completed by the time you are reading this! (Believe me, that sentence earned its exclamation point.) Regular Shabbat services will start in the new space by the beginning of March. In addition, we are pleased to be hosting the main Purim celebration for the Small Shul Collaborative this year, also in March. What better event than Purim, with its wild costumes and raucous hooting, to start the cycle of holiday celebrations in our new space?

Although we'll be putting the synagogue to use right away, circle your calendars for the weekend of April 1-2. All members will be receiving invitations by mail shortly. That weekend we'll be celebrating the official opening of our new home.

Shabbat morning, April 1, will be our congregation's chance to celebrate the ritual completion of our move. Many of us were present as Rabbi Smookler led a moving, full-congregation salute to the old sanctuary on our last Shabbat in Irondequoit. You can expect a similarly heightened experience as we sanctify our new home on April 1. An extended kiddush will follow the service to

*(Continued on page 5)*

## At Our Religious School

Morah Alice and Rabbi Smookler and our religious school students enjoyed learning about Tu b'Shevat and creating beautiful edible treats!





# All in the Family

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## March Birthdays

Lee Sigelow	March 4
Miriam Sternberg	March 9
David Arthur Goldman	March 10
Joyce Towber	March 11
Jacob Zoghlin	March 11
Lori Parkman	March 15
Eliana Lande	March 18
Seth Alan Katzman	March 20
Nicole Meynadasy	March 21
Harry Morton Franklin	March 23
Robert Cohen	March 24
Anne Goldin	March 24
Harrison Smookler	March 25
Mobeen Shirazi	March 26
Roberta Kinel	March 29
Jacob Eckhaus	March 30

## April Birthdays

Benjamin Saltzman	April 1
Rebecca Saltzman	April 1
Harold Fishman	April 3
Harriet Driss	April 8
Kevin McTighe	April 8
Henry Markowitz	April 10
Joshua Freedman	April 11

Rhea Feinberg	April 12
Lisa Klein	April 14
Talia Smookler	April 15
Zach Smookler	April 15
Marsha Greenberg	April 16
Ellen Gertzog	April 17
Phillip Lederer	April 19
Sylvia Stiller	April 24
Gabriel Erlichman	April 25
Susan Wood	April 25
Samuel Langmann	April 26
Erwin Newell	April 26
Richard Towber	April 26
Michael Horowitz	April 27
Hanna Kielar	April 27
Judith Levy	April 29

## Anniversaries

Phillip & Susan Lederer	March 4
Neal & Sue Eckhaus	April 6
Marc Lande & Linda Servetnick	April 30

## Todah Rabah

Thank you to Lilly Sherman for sponsoring a kiddish in honor of her new great grandson, *Efrain Solomon*.



The Interfaith Service on Feb. 5 was a celebration of our shared central belief of **Welcoming the Stranger**. Looking out at the amazing amount of people gathered to pray and hear a call to action was truly inspirational. Out of the recent darkness has come a brilliant light. The most profound for me has been getting to know people from other faiths and walks of life. I could only think that as I stood together with clergy from so many different faiths and saw so many of you sitting and mingling with strangers...how our work has the potential for peace and a shared vision. This service was an example of that greater peace. Now we must do the work.

— **Rabbi Smookler**



Some of the many dozens of flowers brought to the Islamic Center of Rochester on Friday, Feb. 3. The suggestion to bring flowers was presented at the program organized by Rabbi Smookler and the Rochester Board of Rabbis : **Raising Our Voices: Syria and Beyond. A Jewish Response to the Global Refugee Crisis.**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Card Message:

☐ Get Well Wishes

☐ In Honor

☐ In Appreciation

☐ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Congratulations on \_\_\_\_\_

Note: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fund:** If no fund is specified, donation will be made to the David Solomon Building Fund.

☐ David Solomon Building Fund

☐ Marsha Fishman Youth Education Fund

☐ Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

☐ Mitzvah/Kiddish Fund

☐ Herb Kraus Adult Education Fund

☐ Rabbi Skopitz Cultural Events Fund

☐ Shiva Chevra Fund

☐ Gilbert Rosenbaum Cultural/Ritual Fund

☐ Soldier's Project Fund

☐ Torah Repair Fund

### President's Message (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

encourage lingering and more celebrating.

The afternoon of Sunday, April 2 will be our outward-facing event for the Rochester community, including invited guests from other synagogues. We will start with a short program of speeches in the sanctuary to acknowledge Temple Beth David's history and ongoing journey. The program will culminate with the installation of new mezuzot in our doorways. Afterwards there will be tours of our entire space (sanctuary, social hall, and classroom/office) and a reception downstairs in the atrium space for the whole community.

These celebrations will mark a turning point for our congregation. For the past twelve months, so much of our energy has been focused upon finding our bearings in a new place. Turning the corner, we now get to focus on living, thriving, and growing in our new surroundings. With luck, our new home will prove to be one that stimulates our existing members and attracts others in the community to explore what we are about.

Best, Andrew



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discussion of  
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March 5: **Adolfo Kaminsky: A Forger's Life**  
by Sarah Kaminsky (*biography*)

May 7: **Second Person Singular**  
by Sayed Kashua (*fiction*)

You may RSVP for one, some or all of these  
to Ellen:

[egertzog@gmail.com](mailto:egertzog@gmail.com)

Please put Books and Brunch in the subject  
line or call 461-4336



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### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

#### Sarisa Zoghlin

#### Marc Lande

Pam Rosen, Gary, Alex,  
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#### Melissa Meynadasy

Gary Cohen & Pam Rosen

### GET WELL WISHES

#### Pam Rosen

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#### Aaron Freedman

#### Hannah Eckhaus

#### Fronie Hoffman

#### Linda Servetnick

#### Bonnie Abrams

#### Irv Mindlin

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# SAVE THE DATE

## Dedication of our New Sanctuary

### Congregational Celebration

Saturday, April 1

Torah Study at 9 a.m., Shabbat Services at 10 a.m., followed by kiddish luncheon

### Community Celebration

Sunday, April 2

2 p.m., Dessert Reception to follow

# Yahrzeits

Date Observed

**3/1/2017**

William Friedman  
Florence Levenberg

**3/2/2017**

Jack Miller  
Jacob Salkowitz

**3/3/2017**

Minnie Blumkin  
Shirley Shapiro

**3/4/2017**

Pearl Sosne

**3/6/2017**

Mary Freedman

**3/7/2017**

Lillian Abelson  
Pearl Ann Berkov  
Sara Brodsky  
Norman Klein  
Harry Roxin  
Anna Schrier

**3/9/2017**

Sonya Newman

**3/10/2017**

Sarah Fleisher

**3/11/2017**

Munira Daniel  
Gary Passer  
Rose Robbins

**3/12/2017**

Faye Goldin

**3/13/2017**

Helmut Markus

**3/16/2017**

Gertrude Brotsky  
Pearl Feldman  
Morris Herman  
Bessie Leah Kriss  
Lieto Marzouk  
Mary Rothstein Mervis

**3/17/2017**

Julius Berger  
Dorothy Bernberg  
Annette Harris  
Isadore Robert Hoffman  
Jacob Schwartz

**3/18/2017**

Saralie Foote  
Alexander Kopen

**3/19/2017**

Leila Markus  
Martin Miller

**3/20/2017**

William David  
Helen Langmann  
Abraham Rothberg  
Anna Weinstein

**3/21/2017**

Louis Klein

**3/22/2017**

Sonia Alper  
Mildred Deutsch  
Jacob Goldman  
Lilly Grossman  
Marcia Rothstein  
Betty Seigel

**3/23/2017**

Calvin Satzberg

**3/24/2017**

Ida Blass  
Margaret Dehaas  
Harry Levy  
George Ritz  
Mollie Roth

**3/25/2017**

Harry Cohen  
Molly Cohen  
Raymond Gerber  
Sophie Isaacson

**3/26/2017**

Harry Herman  
Stephen Sigelow

**3/27/2017**

Florence Chait  
Bessie Klein  
David Phillips  
Oscar Rabin  
Betty Segelin  
Sharon Tyler

**3/28/2017**

Samuel Katzman

**3/29/2017**

Esther Stein

**3/30/2017**

Philip Fradin  
Herman H. Levine  
Florence Sanow Rappaport

**4/1/2017**

Betty Baker  
Emily Leah Renzel

**4/3/2017**

William Epner

**4/4/2017**

Minetta Klein

**4/5/2017**

Maurice Phillips

**4/7/2017**

Richard Braiman  
Marion Cohen  
Sadie Leitman  
Nathan W. Stamler

**4/8/2017**

Betty Drogen  
Anna Fradin  
Katherine Gan  
Samuel Garey  
Ruth Haymoff Comisar  
Dora Lustik  
Lester Rappaport

**4/10/2017**

Morris Fleisher  
Sylvia Kowal

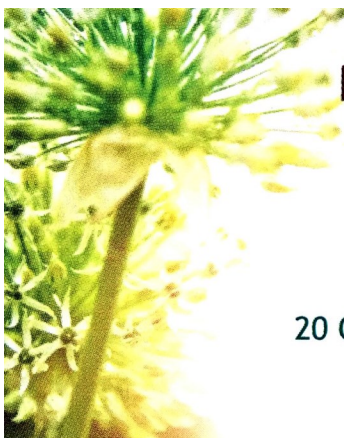
**4/11/2017**

Jonas Berkov  
Rita Schnidman

**4/13/2017**

Mex Feldman  
Blanche Gordon

**The yahrzeit date  
that appears above is  
the date of observance using  
the secular calendar. These  
dates match those of the  
Hebrew calendar for the  
actual date of death.**



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# Yahrzeits

Date Observed

**4/15/2017**

Allen Greenberg  
Harvey Louis Priceman  
Harold Rosenbaum

**4/20/2017**

Maurice Herzog  
Leonard Lutzky  
Janette Shindel

**4/24/2017**

Obbe Abelson  
Bessie Goldberg  
Ira Goldstein  
Louis Kopen  
Esther Levy  
Sally Zeif

**4/27/2017**

Molly Baker  
Sidney Stamler  
Ida Sanow

**4/17/2017**

Samuel Applebaum

**4/21/2017**

Seymour Weingarten

**4/18/2017**

Selma Bachman  
Ruth Drexler

**4/23/2017**

Harry Abelson  
Elizabeth Daniel  
Marvin Foigelman  
Sarah Stiller

**4/25/2017**

Rebecca Goldsmith  
Esther Herzog  
Belle Schwatz

**4/29/2017**

Hyman Moldawsky Marlowe

**4/30/2017**

Blanche Diamond  
Fannie Hurwitz  
Ida Ritz

**4/19/2017**

Sylvia Gertzog  
Harold Phillips

**4/26/2017**

Sidney Gallant  
Ruben Wolinsky



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